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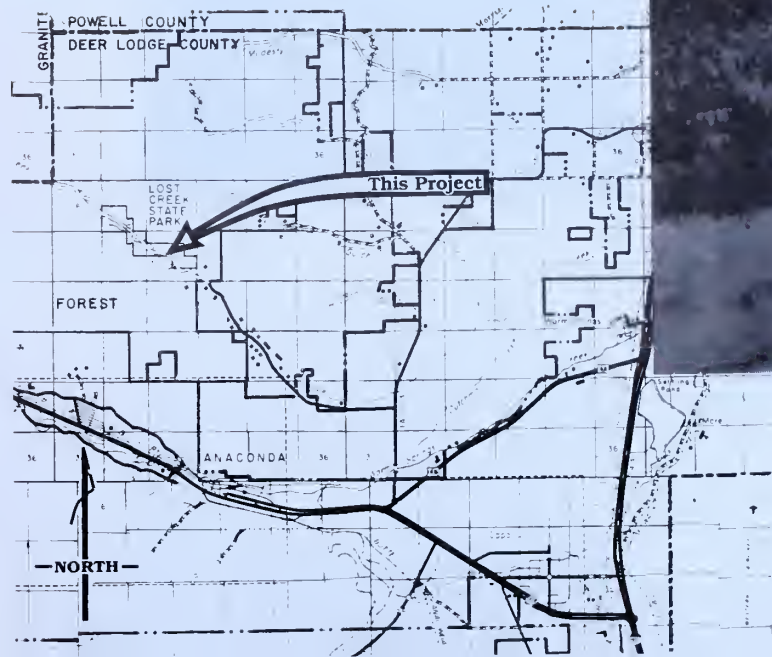


LOST CREEK

State Park


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Entrance Road

VICINITY MAP



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THE AREA

Lost Creek Canyon is an extremely beautiful and popular recreation area located about nine miles north of Anaconda, Montana. At the urging of the Anaconda community, 462.1 acres of the canyon were set aside as a state park in 1956.

Spectacular limestone cliffs with pink and white granite intrusives rise 1200 feet above the canyon's narrow floor. These cliffs contrast with the abundant lush vegetation of the canyon floor, giving Lost Creek a unique rugged beauty, and accounting for much of the park's popularity.

Lost Creek Falls, in the northwest corner of the park, cascades over a 50 foot drop to provide one of the most scenic and popular spots in the park.

Wildlife in the park is also notable, with numerous species inhabiting the canyon floor, as well as mountain goats which are frequently seen on the cliffs far above.



Lost Creek Falls



EXISTING USE, ACCESS, AND FACILITIES

Residents of nearby Butte and Anaconda find Lost Creek an appealing recreation area; a large percentage of the park's use is by people from these communities. Because the park is only a short distance from Interstate 90, it also receives substantial use by visitors from other parts of Montana and other states.

A one-lane road provides the only vehicle access to the park. Along some sections, drivers can leave the road to allow approaching vehicles to pass; but in some places, rock walls, trees, or other obstructions make two-way traffic impossible. This road receives so much use that it has worn through to bedrock in many places. In addition, during spring snowmelt and in rainy periods, ruts and dips in the road fill with water. Because of its condition and the limited funding available for maintenance, the road is nearly impassable much of the year.

Minor quantities of gravel have been placed on particularly bad portions of the road when absolutely necessary. The only other road improvements that have been made in the last 21 years occurred in 1971, when a bridge was reconstructed and the grade on a short stretch improved with the help of the Anaconda Job Corps Center, and in 1978 when a washed out bridge was replaced.

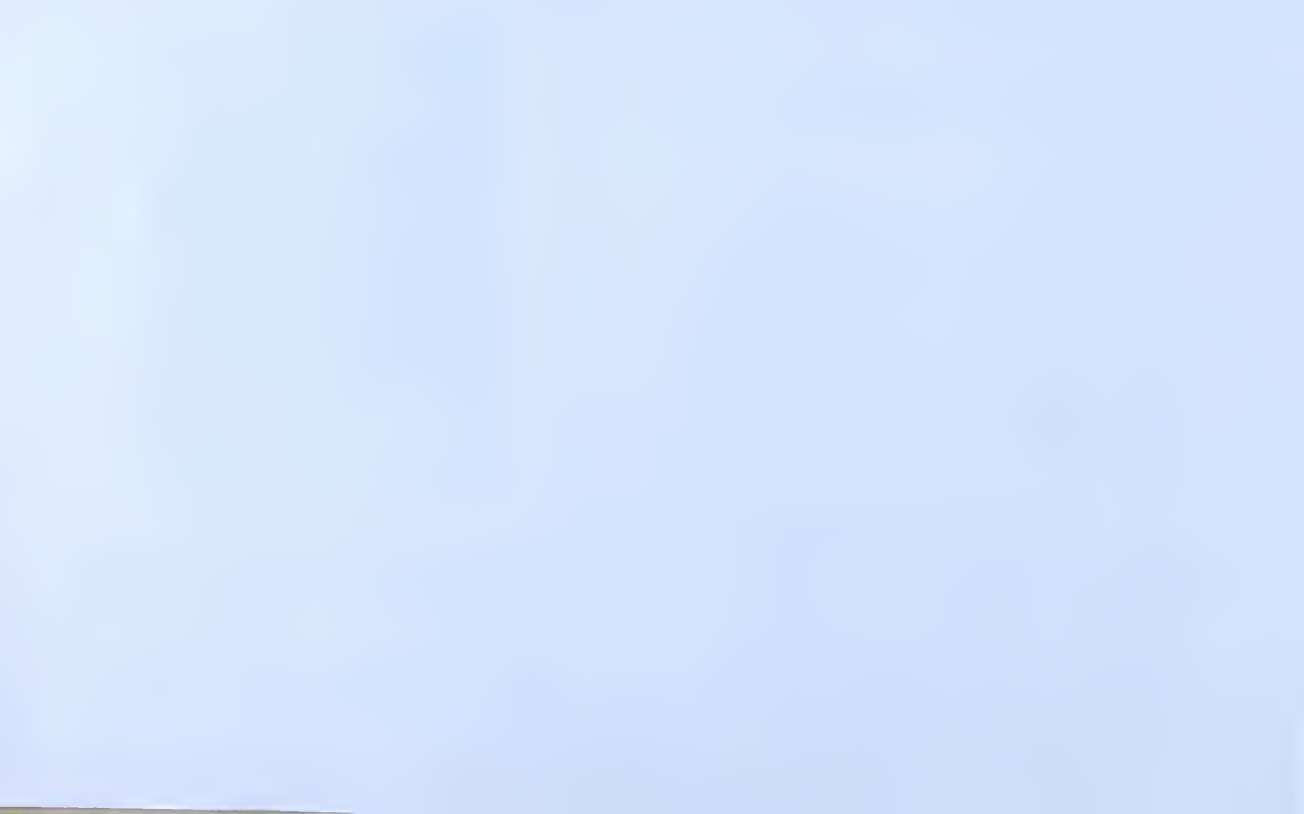
Picnic tables, outdoor stoves, latrines, and garbage cans are the only formally-developed facilities within the park. These facilities were installed in 1963 with the assistance of laborers from the nearby Montana State Prison. The 16-year old latrines no longer meet health and environmental standards.

Heavy use of certain areas for parking, camping, and hiking has, through time, led to the creation of "unofficial" campgrounds, parking lots, and trails. Conditions in these areas are not as good as they would be if boundaries were defined and the facilities maintained. For instance, the trail from the road to Lost Creek Falls is narrow; campgrounds do not have level areas on which to pitch a tent and they are not equipped with enough garbage cans.



There is no orientation area where people can obtain information about the location of picnicking, camping, day-use, and parking areas; latrines; trails; and points of interest. There are not enough signs to direct people to and through the park.

In short, the park's existing access and facilities are inadequate to accommodate the use they receive. Without adequate facilities, park visitors cannot fully enjoy the area. And with heavy use, the lack of facilities in Lost Creek poses a threat to the very resources that attract visitors.





"Lost Creek Falls"

SPECIFIC NEEDS

1. The road through the park needs to be widened and gravelled; adequate drainage should be provided. These improvements would decrease maintenance costs in the long run and provide reasonable access.
2. The boundaries of parking areas need to be defined; the condition of parking areas needs to be upgraded.
3. The exact route of the trail to Lost Creek Falls needs to be established and the path paved with asphalt. Paving would make it easier and less expensive to maintain the trail. With the heavy use this trail receives, paving would also prevent resource damage in the long-run. In addition, it would make the falls more accessible to senior citizens, handicapped people, and others.
4. An orientation area needs to be established near the park entrance.
5. Existing latrines need to be replaced and relocated in areas of greatest use.
6. More garbage cans are needed throughout the park.
7. Directional signs are needed both inside and outside the park.

NEED FOR FUNDING

It is significant that, to date, nearly all development and improvement of Lost Creek State Park has been possible because of the assistance of volunteered labor. Most state funding for the Department of Fish and Game is earmarked for specific purposes and cannot be used for development and maintenance of state parks. Only small amounts from the Department's general fund can be directed to Lost Creek State Park.

If we are to manage Lost Creek State Park in a manner which accommodates the needs and demands of its users, we must have additional funding to make necessary improvements and maintain existing facilities.



COST ESTIMATE

1. Roadwork:	
a. Entrance road from forest boundary to spring	\$53,760.00
b. Orientation Area	504.00
c. Parking Area	5,214.00
d. Loop road	2,520.00
e. Entry road from spring to turn around	23,894.00
2. Latrines:	
a. Obliterate existing latrines	8,000.00
b. Install 2 double latrines	11,000.00
c. Install 4 single latrines	16,000.00
3. Foottrail at Falls	
a. Grading and gravel	480.00
b. Asphalt surfacing	890.00
4. Carbage cans	6,000.00
5. Signing:	
a. Directional sign	630.00
b. Orientation sign	600.00
c. Misc. internal signs	1,500.00
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	SUB TOTAL
	\$130,992.00
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Engineering, Inspection, Surveying, and Contingencies	44,008.00
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	TOTAL
	\$175,000.00

**prepared by
Parks Division
Montana Dept. of Fish and Game**